DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 370 695 PS 022 370

AUTHOR	Cullen, Joy
TITLE	Rethinking Table Activities. Australian Early Childhood Resource Booklets No. 5.
INSTITUTION	Australian Early Childhood Association, Inc., Watson.
REPORT NO	ISBN-1-86323-028-9; ISSN-0156-0999
PUB DATE	Dec 91
NOTE	19p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Australian Early Childhood Association, Inc., P.O. Box 105, Watson, Australian Capital Territory 2602, Australia ($6.25 Australian).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Class Activities; Creative Activities; Dramatic Play; Early Childhood Education; Foreign Countries; *Learning Activities; Learning Centers (Classroom); Learning Strategies; *Play; *Preschool Children; *Preschool Curriculum; *Student Centered Curriculum
IDENTIFIERS	Australia

ABSTRACT

This booklet discusses the use of structured table activities in preschool programs in Australia and alternatives to these activities, such as free play. The booklet notes that structured table activities tend to be teacher-directed, passive, non-creative, and focus on goals set by the teacher. They often do not address the learning requirements of young children, who need to feel competent and independent, pursue their own interests, represent their own experiences, focus on processes rather than products, and interact with peers and adults. The booklet recommends programming designed to meet young children's needs, that is, child-centered, active, creative, and focused on goals set by the child. Indicators of children's use of independent learning strategies, interest in activities, and use of creative processes are also examined. The booklet concludes with guidelines for the appropriate use of table activities. (MDM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

AUSTRALIAN EARLY CHILDHOOD RESOURCE BOOKLETS
PUBLISHED BY THE AUSTRALIAN EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION INC.
Registered by Australia Post Publication No. NBG 2618
No. 5 December, 1991

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
[X] This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
[ ] Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 370 695

RETHINKING TABLE ACTIVITIES

JOY CULLEN

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Pam Cahir
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

PS 022370

AUSTRALIAN EARLY CHILDHOOD RESOURCE BOOKLETS have been published five times each year, by the Resource Booklets Committee of the Australian Early Childhood Association Inc., Knox Street, Watson, ACT 2602. From 1992 only four booklets per year will be published.

Committee Members:

Marilyn Fleer (Editor)
Lesleigh Eley
Anne Fletcher
Jean Gifford
Kath Larsson
Therezia Mihajlovic
Jane Smyth
Dawn Sword
Veronica Wraith (Editorial Assistant)

The purpose of the Australian Early Childhood Resource Booklets is to provide a forum for the publication of Australian information which will be a resource to people interested in young children.

Subscriptions to: Australian Early Childhood Association Inc.
PO Box 105
Watson, ACT 2602
Yearly (4 issues) $23.00 including postage (1992)

About the author: Joy Cullen is Senior Lecturer in Early Childhood Education at Curtin University of Technology in Perth, W.A. She has carried out research on the influence of early learning environments on young children's learning strategies.

Photographs: The photographs were taken by Ian Fry at the Lady Gowrie Child Centre, Adelaide.

Copyright 1991. All rights reserved by the Australian Early Childhood Association Inc. Material herein must not be reproduced in any form without the written permission of the Association.
Registered for posting as a publication — Category B.

ISSN 0 156 0999
ISBN 1 86323 030 0

Printed by Reynolds Printing — Canberra
Typeset by TJ Advertising & Promotions — Canberra

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

RETHINKING TABLE ACTIVITIES

JOY CULLEN

CONTENTS

The origin of table activities 2

What do children learn? 3

Teacher objectives for table activities 6

Young children's learning needs 7

Programming to meet children's learning needs 9

Indicators of children's use of independent learning strategies 11

Indicators of children's interest in activities 11

Indicators of children's use of creative processes 12

Guidelines for the appropriate use of table activities 13

Conclusion 15

Glossary 15

References 16

Further reading 16

THE ORIGIN OF TABLE ACTIVITIES

Today, teachers and caregivers in early childhood education still espouse the traditional view that children learn best through free play. A visitor to many early childhood centres will, however, see children spending considerable amounts of time at tables, engaged in structured activities. These are planned and usually supervised by adults. Although they are designed as creative activities they are apt to be adult directed and intended to achieve the adult's goal rather than the child's. Often they are compulsory; children are expected to do their 'work' before they are released to engage in free play.

The reasons underlying the emergence of this type of activity in early childhood programs are not entirely clear but several influential factors have probably contributed to the trend. Firstly is the increased emphasis on cognitive objectives in early education and the growth of curriculum guidelines for preschool programs. A second factor is the emphasis on the educational value of structured play which has been evident in recent reports of play research (e.g. Sylva, 1984). Both trends have highlighted a more directive role for the teacher than the supervisory role suggested by the traditional free-play program. Teachers also refer to pressure from parents for more formal early childhood programs as an important influence on programming. From this perspective, changing societal values about the purpose of early childhood education are affecting educational practice.

Teachers and caregivers still espouse the traditional view that children learn best through free play.

WHAT DO CHILDREN LEARN?

The following observations taken from programs for four- and five-year-olds can help us to identify the quality of the learning experience provided by table activities.

Observation One

Mark is standing in the block corner holding a plane made with Lego. He walks around the block corner 'flying' his plane and making 'aeroplane noises' with his mouth. He goes to the Lego box and selects another piece of Lego for his plane. The plane starts to fall apart so he sits down and removes the wings. He tries to put them on another part of the plane but they fall off. He takes more Lego pieces and puts them on. Mark moves around the block corner again flying his plane and making aeroplane noises. He pats a child on the back and shows his plane to the child. He points to his plane 'You make one like my big one. Mine's a big one'. He 'runs' the plane along some blocks on the floor and lifts it into the air. A child crashes into Mark's plane with his Lego car. Mark does not react. He fixes the wing on his plane and looks at a Stop Sign that a child is holding. He points to the sign and says to the child with the Lego car 'That sign says STOP'. Mark sits looking at the other child who is driving his Lego car. The teacher directs Mark to a table where children are engaged in a matching activity. Mark sits in front of a piece of paper, looks around at the other children and plays with the paper. He does not attempt to start the activity. He sits looking at the teacher with his hands in his chin and his elbows on the table, then leans on the table. The teacher tells Mark to start the matching activity. He picks up a shape and applies glue to the back; he sticks it on to the paper after matching it with the corresponding shape drawn on the paper. Mark takes a green crayon and draws around the shape. He looks at the teacher as she walks away from the table and looks at the other children at the table. He remains inactive and does not continue with the matching activity. The teacher directs him to continue with his work. He takes a green crayon again and draws a 'face' around the shape that he has glued on the paper. He puts the crayon down and sits looking at the children again. He takes a sponge from the table and very carefully wipes the glue from his work. He puts the sponge down and gives his work to the teacher.

While Mark completed the matching activity at the table he:

waited passively to be told what to do;

followed the teacher's direction;

watched the other children;

gave the completed product to the teacher.

Compare these behaviours with the earlier part of the observation when Mark was engaged in free play in the block area. He:

decided to repair a faulty construction;

modified his representation of a plane;

persisted with repairing his plane when it was damaged;

incorporated a written symbol into his play;

interacted positively with other children.

The most salient contrast between these two episodes is the dimension of control. In the block corner Mark had control over his own actions, and his language, decisions and actions related to his own purposes. At the table activity Mark's behaviour was controlled by the teacher's purposes. Mark conformed to these purposes insofar as he completed the matching activity, but there was little evidence of his intrinsic interest in the task or desire to extend it in any way.

Observation Two

Juan is sitting with three children at the collage table working on a collage activity. They are supervised by the teaching assistant. Magazine pictures of winter clothes are spread out on the table. Juan is cutting around a picture of a hat. He picks up the glue brush, dips it into the jar and spreads glue on the back of his picture. He then presses it onto a piece of paper with the heading 'Clothes we wear in winter'. The observer asks Juan what he is doing. 'Cutting' says Juan. He looks puzzled at the next question about what he is cutting and does not respond. He continues with the activity until his page is covered with winter clothes. The observer asks 'Did you like making this?' 'Yes' says Juan 'I like cutting'. 'What will you do with your picture now that it is finished, Juan?' 'Put it in the box' (the usual practice in this preschool when completed products are to be taken home). 'What will you do with it at home?' 'Put it away. I'll watch TV.'

In this episode Juan appears to enjoy the activity of cutting. He does not, however, relate this skill to the 'winter clothes' theme of the activity. Nor does he anticipate any further use for the completed product. While Juan participates cheerfully in the activity to which he has been directed, his own perception of the task as 'cutting' does not match the teacher's objective of learning about winter.

What might Juan have learned? He may have learned:

to follow the teacher's directions to complete a task;
there is no immediate use for the product;
that cutting is the purpose of the task (despite its cognitive objectives).

Children may enjoy adult-directed activities but their perceptions of the tasks may not match the adult's planned objectives.

Observation Three

The visitor's first impression of the centre is one of colour. Around the walls are colourful charts and displays of children's art. On closer inspection, these are revealed to be arranged thematically. On this occasion the teacher's theme is the ocean and murals and mobiles depict many forms of ocean life. The visitor's purpose is to talk with the children about some of the things they do at preschool. The children are used to visitors and are willing to talk about their activities. At the completion of each conversation, the visitor asks each child to show her something he or she has made. Again the children are willing to cooperate and each takes the visitor to one of the murals or mobiles on display. There is one problem, however, few children are able to identify a particular fish or creature as their own. The reason for this is very clear to the visitor: the displays, although attractive and colourful, represent the teacher's planning rather than the children's. Apart from the occasional variation caused by individual differences in cutting or glueing skills, the fish are identical. They had been created with the aid of templates and precut pieces of coloured paper, according to the teacher's directions. The children appear to be proud of the displays when they show them to the visitor but there is no evidence of individual creativity or planning. Nor are the themes of the displays apparent in any of their spontaneous play.

What might these children have learned about their art?

There is a 'right' way to create a fish;
the teacher knows the right way;
there is no scope for individual expression;
the child's representation of a fish is not valued.

TEACHER OBJECTIVES FOR TABLE ACTIVITIES

In the above examples we have seen that the children completed the product according to the teachers' instructions. In this way, the teachers created a task-completion orientation for table activities, in contrast to a learning orientation (Marshall, 1987), or a creative orientation. The teachers were unaware of this effect of the activities and their planned objectives were probably comprehensive and educationally sound. For example, the collage activity on the theme of winter clothes could have a cognitive objective (to extend children's knowledge of materials that keep us warm) and a creative objective (to arrange selected pictures creatively to form a composite picture).

In Juan's case, however, the cognitive objective was not achieved; he perceived the task in terms of its physical requirements of cutting. He did 'create' a collage but the creative components of the activity were reduced substantially by the teacher's preselection of pictures and restricted interpretation of collage: that is, there was no provision for the addition of other materials to extend Juan's ideas.

Similar problems occurred with the ocean mural. The teacher's theme was designed to increase children's understanding of ocean life but the failure to encourage children's representations, or include their ideas in planning the mural, limited the meaning of the tasks for each child. Furthermore, the stereotyped format of the displays restricted any creative development of the theme by the children. Consequently, any creative objectives were unlikely to be achieved by the activity. The same problem was apparent in Mark's observation where cognitive and creative objectives were combined in a matching activity. The activity did not relate to Mark's immediate interests and, as a symbolic task, may have held little meaning for him. The 'creative' components were limited to decoration with crayons; this held little intrinsic interest for Mark and he completed the task perfunctorily.

The children in these observations shared some common characteristics. They were cooperative, busy and apparently happy. These are desirable outcomes of group programs for young children but we must question if they are sufficient outcomes of planned learning experiences. If we compare the practices reflected in these observations with the concept of 'developmentally appropriate practice' (Bredekamp, 1987), how do they measure? In the next section, some critical needs of the young learner are outlined to enable us to evaluate the worth of table activities and to provide a theoretical framework for guidelines about the appropriate use of table activities.

YOUNG CHILDREN'S LEARNING NEEDS

The years from three to five are a time in which children are eager learners. It is also a time when children are learning 'how-to-learn' and programs for young children should acknowledge this vital ingredient. To achieve this goal it is important that the needs of young learners are matched with appropriate learning experiences. A mismatch between learning needs and learning experiences can have lasting effects on children's developing perceptions of themselves as learners.

1. **Young learners need to feel competent and independent**. Children's perceptions of themselves as learners are influenced by their experiences of success and failure. When children are able to make choices and decisions about the activities available in a planned learning environment they have many opportunities to experience success. Even their initial failures can contribute to feelings of competence when they are encouraged to persist, to try alternative ways of reaching a solution, to experiment and to ask questions about a learning task. When children have restricted choices, or adults determine the majority of decisions affecting the child's learning activities, many opportunities to practise independent learning strategies and to develop feelings of competence and satisfaction with success are lost.

Young learners need to feel competent and independent and be free to pursue their own interests.

2. **Young learners need to pursue their own interests**. Young children are characterised by an intrinsic desire to make sense of their world and much of their play can be perceived in this light. When children are rewarded for engaging in activities that are intrinsically interesting or perceive an activity to be under the control of an adult they often lose interest in the activity despite its initial attraction (Gottfried, 1983). The overuse of prescribed art and craft activities, by focusing on the adult's perspective rather than the child's, can have the effect of reducing children's interest in creative activities.

3. **Young learners need to represent their experiences**. Young children's thinking is embedded in their everyday experiences; they can be challenged by new ideas and events but these still need to relate meaningfully to their real-life environment. When teachers bring appropriate content and children's interests together in a stimulating and responsive learning environment children will want to represent their experiences through a range of media and resources. Art, constructive play, music and movement, sociodramatic play, experimentation with writing, are all forms of representation which form a bridge between the child's concrete experiences and emergent symbolic thinking. Prescribed art and craft activities do not fulfil this important function because they reflect the teacher's representation rather than the child's.

Young learners need to focus on processes rather than products. They have an intrinsic desire to experiment and manipulate.

4. **Young learners need to focus on processes rather than products**. Young children have an intrinsic desire to experiment, to manipulate, to make marks, and to construct things which yield tangible results. Expressive activities such as finger painting and constructions with boxes, collage and blocks provide children with opportunities to find out about the properties of materials as well as to express themselves. An important quality of these activities is that it is the process rather than the product which drives the child. When a product is created the child's motive may be to have a visible effect on elements of the environment; the products themselves are often discarded or converted for other purposes. Prescribed art and craft activities are product-driven, consequently they fail to meet the child's need to experiment with processes.

5. **Young learners need to interact with peers and adults**. One of the ways in which children learn how-to-learn is through interactions with a supportive adult who understands the value of suggestions, prompts, questions and example in promoting children's use of independent learning strategies. Interactions with peers can serve a similar function with a friend taking the role of 'tutor'; for example, while engaged in collaborative constructive activities or sociodramatic play (Cullen, 1991). With young children this type of interactive learning is most effective when it occurs in meaningful contexts relating to their own interests. Table activities which separate a task from the child's immediate interests are unlikely to provide effective contexts for interactive learning.

PROGRAMMING TO MEET CHILDREN'S LEARNING NEEDS

The children at Midvale Preschool rush excitedly across the outdoor area to the boundary fence where they can see some earth-moving equipment passing by. Their teacher moves towards them to see what the commotion is about and explains that the equipment is going to the end of the road where major roadworks are about to begin. At the end of the session, the teacher finds time to think about the incident and to plan ways of building upon the children's interest in the following days. The teacher discusses this with the assistant and together they brainstorm ideas for related activities. They produce the following list:

- take the children on a walk to observe the roadworks;
- provide expressive art materials to allow the children to represent their experiences;
- recreate through mime the movement of the equipment and vehicles;
- set up a box construction activity to create roadworks equipment;
- revisit the roadworks to observe progress and take photographs as a record of the visit;
- recall the visit by talking about the photographs;
- develop a wall chart with the children using photographs and written captions based on the children's recall;
- plan a roadworks learning centre for the indoor area (to include books on roads and vehicles, and a collection of road materials);
- put new equipment and a hose in the sandpit to encourage road construction.

Mini-themes of this nature are often used by preschool teachers to develop an integrated program which meets cognitive, language, creative, socioemotional and physical objectives. The roadworks theme provided a means by which children could express themselves through art and constructive activities, plan and talk about group activities, participate in related sociodramatic play, and increase their knowledge about activities in the local community. Most importantly, the theme stemmed from the children's current interests and, as an ongoing event in the local community, could be talked about and observed with family and friends.

What part did structured table activities play in this program? The teacher planned several group table activities: box constructions; drawing and collage activities relating to wall displays; making a collection of pictures about roadworks using magazines; and other activities which would contribute to the learning centre. The essential component of these activities was that children participated in their planning and were able to choose resources and materials which met their purposes. The children also initiated their own activities, for example, by converting the block area into a roadworks site where their box constructions could be used. In this process the teacher acted as a resource, making suggestions and providing additional materials where these were necessary to extend the children's ideas. When products were used for displays they formed part of the learning centre, which was available for independent use, or were located near to related play areas, such as the block and construction areas, to stimulate further play. The teacher also set up a finger painting activity table which allowed children to experiment with the effects of adding different materials such as sand, gravel, laterite, in order to explore further the properties of these materials.

Children need to participate in the planning of activities and be able to choose resources and materials.

In the above example, the table activities complemented and extended the children's ongoing play on the roadworks theme; they did not replace it. Nor did they replace the exploratory learning which occurred in the outdoor environment and learning centres. In this sense, table activities can have an important function of stimulating and extending children's learning as well as supporting their creativity. How do we know when table activities are performing these valuable functions? The following section outlines behavioural indicators which teachers can use to evaluate the effectiveness of a table activity for meeting children's needs.

INDICATORS OF CHILDREN'S USE OF INDEPENDENT LEARNING STRATEGIES

Children's use of independent learning strategies indicates that they are learning how-to-learn. When children use such strategies systematically to assist their learning they are adopting a strategic approach to learning.

Note behaviours which indicate a strategic approach to learning:

- persists with difficult or challenging tasks;
- selects resources to extend play;
- uses independent strategies on an activity (*i.e.* monitoring, checking, evaluating, for instance, when a child notices a mistake and corrects it).

Note language which indicates a strategic approach to learning:

- uses self-instructions and self-monitoring during activities;
- questions self, teachers, or peers to clarify a task;
- gives clear instructions to peers in co-operative activities;
- uses verbs such as 'think', 'plan', 'remember', 'imagine', 'decorate'.

INDICATORS OF CHILDREN'S INTEREST IN ACTIVITIES

Children's interest in an activity provides an indication of their intrinsic motivation to learn.

Note behaviours which indicate intrinsic motivation:

- returns to an activity to complete or extend it;
- chooses a related activity after completing a task;
- extends activities creatively;

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- shows other children or adults books and pictures about a related activity;
- talks about an activity with others;
- is absorbed in an activity;
- shows satisfaction with success.

When children are interested in an activity they will be absorbed in it and show satisfaction when they feel they have been successful.

INDICATORS OF CHILDREN'S USE OF CREATIVE PROCESSES

In addition to planning activities which built upon children's interests and promoted an independent, strategic approach to learning, the teacher at Midvale Preschool also planned for the children's creative development. This was done in several ways: by providing art materials to use in an open-ended way to represent experiences; by introducing new materials at an art table to encourage experimentation and new techniques; by guiding children in their planning of group activities and supporting their efforts with additional resources and materials, encouragement and discussion; by participating in creative activities in order to model enjoyment and attract children to the activity; and by suggesting techniques or resources to extend children's spontaneous play on the roadworks theme.

The teacher's planning for the creative domain was guided by an awareness of the creative processes observable in young children. These included the following:

- uses materials and resources flexibly to achieve goals;
- shows originality with art work;
- suggests original or unusual uses for resources;
- elaborates creative activities;
- generates several possibilities when planning collaborative activities;
- uses imagination to deal with everyday challenges.

GUIDELINES FOR THE APPROPRIATE USE OF TABLE ACTIVITIES

1. Ensure that the activity matches the objectives planned for the unit or theme. Activities which are planned around a theme should promote children's understanding of their world, and should not provide merely a superficial link between activities.

2. Do not replace real-life experiences with table activities. For example, crumbling crepe paper to make a flower mural on the theme of spring is no substitute for discovering evidence of spring outdoors.

3. Avoid the use of templates and precut shapes which interfere with the child's representation.

4. Provide a wide variety of art materials and allow children to choose materials to decorate their artwork according to their own wishes.

5. Plan art and craft activities which are within the ability range of the child; they should not depend upon adult assistance for their completion.

6. Display products in ways which emphasise the differences between children's work.

7. Use products in meaningful ways when this is appropriate. For example, a windmill activity which involves folding a fan could be used outside to explore the effects of wind.

8. Plan group murals and displays, with the assistance of children, to record their experiences: for example, after an autumn walk. Extend children's ideas by providing additional resources and clarifying their statements.

9. Provide opportunities for children to talk about their activities and share their experiences with others to encourage them to reflect about their learning experiences and to increase their awareness of their own learning.

10. Talk with children about their activities in order to gain insight about the child's perspective. Use comments rather than questions to develop a natural conversation.

11. Stimulate children to clarify and extend their play through carefully planned learning centres which incorporate displays and charts they have made. For example, locate a mural recording a visit to a farm next to constructive play materials to stimulate related sociodramatic play.

Children will be attracted to activities which relate to their interests.

12. Avoid compulsory table activities which segment the child's day. Activities which relate to the child's interests will attract the child without the need to direct children to particular activities.

13. Introduce new ways of using materials for creative activities in small-group contexts. Children will be attracted to the activity by the opportunity to experiment in different ways and the presence of the adult.

14. Plan table activities to complement more active learning experiences; they should not dominate programs.

15. Help children to plan their activities by describing the available activities at the beginning of the session. This can provide a link with previous activities and increase children's awareness of choices available to them.

CONCLUSION

Are table activities developmentally appropriate? The answer to this question is, of course, conditional. If activities are prescribed by teachers, do not relate meaningfully to children's everyday concerns, foster a passive learning style in children and impede their creativity, they are not developmentally appropriate. If they are used flexibly to extend children's skills and understandings, if they encourage children to make decisions and choices, if they build upon children's intrinsic motivation to learn, if they contribute to children's creativity and are valid expressions of their everyday experiences, then they can contribute to exciting and challenging programs for young children.

Table activities can contribute to exciting and challenging programs for young children if they are used flexibly to build upon children's intrinsic motivation to learn.

GLOSSARY

creativity In young children, engagement in creative processes such as manipulating ideas, objects, and materials, with fluency, flexibility and originality.

developmentally appropriate practice Educational practice which is based upon current knowledge about children's development and learning.

intrinsic motivation The desire to participate in an activity for the satisfaction inherent in the activity, rather than for external rewards.

learning experiences The range of activities in which a child engages in a planned learning environment.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

learning-to-learn The acquisition of strategies which assist the child to engage in effective learning experiences.

representation The use of a different medium to represent an idea, object, or event; forms a bridge between concrete experience and symbolic thinking.

strategic learning The systematic use of strategies such as persistence, seeking additional resources, or asking questions, in order to assist learning.

References

Cullen, J. (1991) Young children's learning strategies: Continuities and discontinuities. *International Journal of Early Childhood* **23** (1), 12-13.

Bredekamp, S. (1987) *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* (Expanded version). Washington: NAEYC.

Gottfried, A.E. (1983) Intrinsic motivation in young children. *Young Children* **39** (1), 64-73.

Marshall, H.H. (1987) Building a learning orientation. *Theory Into Practice* **26** (1), 8-14.

Sylva, K. (1984) A hard-headed look at the fruits of play. *Early Childhood Development and Care* **15**, 171-183 (and in *Early Childhood Folio No. 2* (1986) ACER/NZCER).

Further Reading

_____ (1987) Child choice—Another way to individualise—Another form of preventive discipline. *Young Children* **43** (1), 48-54. (Discusses reasons for allowing children to choose in early childhood classrooms.)

Copple, C., Sigel, I.E. & Saunders, R. (1984) *Educating the Young Thinker: Classroom Strategies for Cognitive Growth*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum. (Focuses on representation of experiences in all areas of the curriculum, including the expressive arts.)

Cullen, J. (1988) Pre-school children's learning strategies. *SET: Research Information for Teachers* (No. 2, Item 16). ACER/NZCER. (Compares preschool children's use of learning strategies in free-choice and teacher-directed activities.)

Katz, L.G. & Chard, S.C. (1989) *Engaging Children's Minds: The Project Approach*. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex. (Focuses on the development of social and intellectual competencies through informal, open-ended activities.)

NAEYC (1991) Position statement: Guidelines for appropriate curriculum content and assessment in programs serving children ages 3 through 8. *Young Children* **46**(3), 21-38. (A concise overview of how children learn; "Suggestions for using curriculum guidelines" includes several questions which could be used to assess the value of table activities.)

Schiller, W. & Veale, A. (1989) *An Integrated Expressive Arts Program*. Australian Early Childhood Resource Booklet, No. 4. (Includes many practical examples of expressive activities which encourage children's creativity.)